STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

MILITARY AS A PROFESSION OF CHOICE:
HOW TO ACHIEVE, MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE CONSENSUS

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ABSTRACT

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Trough an analysis of the civil-military relationship in the United States, find an effective way to improve that of the Italian Army.

In order to find a recommended course of action to change, maintain, and enhance the consensus, the study will analyze:

- the roots of the Army/military society in the Country, Constitutions, Laws and people, for both Nations;

- the different feeling about the Army in different macro Regions of the Unites States and three macro Regions in Italy;

- the sociological approach to the issues, to understand how the consensus is built;

the analysis of what the Americans and the Italians have done.

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PURPOSE

This paper has the objective of suggesting a strategy to improve the internal and exterior consensus for the US Army and the Italian Army by analyzing and comparing the different historical and social backgrounds, values and expectations of the citizens of the two Nations.

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The United States Army was formally born on 14 June 1775[1] when the Second Continental Congress created the Continental Army.

The Italian Army meanwhile was born on 4 May 1861[2] at the end of the War of Independence as a reunion, under only one command, of different regional armies that had fought together against the Austrian coalition in Northern Italy.

The antecedents of the US Army, however, extend themselves considerably farther back in time. In fact, the American colonists had been intermittently engaged in various forms of organized warfare for much of the preceding century.

The early English settlements were generally small and isolated, and most military defense had to be local defense. As the result, the colonists were obliged to develop local military units, the militia, to provide for their security.

Generally speaking, all able-bodied men between the ages of 16 and 60 were required to report for regular training in the colonial militia. When trouble came, the militia would be called to drive off and punish the troublemakers, and thanks to its success, the militia, as a defensive institution, won the loyalty of the American colonists and soon became part of the social and traditional fabric of American colonial life.

For the Italian point of view, the situation was completely different.

The reunion of Italy under the King Victor Emanuel II, highlighted the differences among the three different Italians macro-regions.

The Northern Region was subdivided into East and West factions. The West used to live under a kind of French guidance and colonization, and the East was under the harsh control of the Austrian Hungarian Empire.

The Center Region lived under the temporal and secular power of the Pope, in a region in which Religion and State had became one.

The Southern Region used to live under a distant, but smooth Spanish domination, where outside effective rules and control, a parallel structure of power connected with the great land owners evolved. These landowners were so strong that they had been able to oblige the many ruling bodies of the subdivided Kingdom of Naples[3] to deal with them, until they were able to succeed them in the authority role as new governors. This double structure of power put its roots deeply into a system of reciprocal protection that hundreds of years later became notorious with the name of "mafia".

The Italian Army in 1870[4] entered Rome removing the Pope from his secular power, occupied his Castle that became the Kingdom House (and in our age the Presidential House) and enclosed the Pope in the small Vatican City.

In the south, the Italian Army was occupied fighting the bandits that were constituted from the disbanded army of the "Two Sicilies" Kingdom.

Following a different approach, with different emotions, with its roots deep in history, the North looked at the Army as a means of conquest, something to use to improve its economic position. The Center saw the military like someone who had changed the rules and imposed a new tax without any promise of transcendental advantage; the South saw the Army as the next oppressor.

Many years had to pass until the ideal concept of a Nation and a National Identity could be share throughout the Italians people.

2. LEGAL BASIC FRAMEWORK

The basic legal framework in which the "Northern American military society" found itself is the American Constitution.

The Constitution of the United States firmly establishes civilian control over the military services and underlines another basic precept, the separation of powers, declaring that Congress alone can raise and support armies, provide for the control of the militia and declare war.

The Article II provides that "...the President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and the Navy ..."[5]

The military forces thus became an integral part of the national political purpose. Being first a whole citizen and then a soldier became an expression of the will of the Nation.

In the same way in the Italian Constitution, the military services are under civilian control. In synthesis there is the division of power in which the Executive Power is held by the

Government, the Legislative Power derives from the Parliament (two Chambers) and the Judicial power is maintained by the Magistratura (Judgement Court).

The President of the Italian Republic is also, formally, the Commander of the Armed Forces. He exercises his authority through the Minister of Defense and the Chief of the Joint Staff.

The President is also the Chairmen of the Supreme Council of Defense, and he can make the declaration of war, which have been decided by the Chambers (Article 87 of the Italian Constitution)

Article 52 of the Italian Constitution declares that *"the service in the armed forces is a sacred duty for all the citizens..."*[6] and it was the legal basis for the draft service that fed the Italian Armed Forces until 1999. Now a new and more inclusive interpretation of the article expands the opportunities for service to females too, and gives to the people the option to choose where to serve, in the military or civilian duty.

3. SOCIAL BACKGROUND

In the light of what has been analyzed above, it is possible to say that the moral expectation of a representative of the military is to be recognized as part, or better, as an expression of his own civilian society.

To achieve, maintain, and enhance the consensus, both internal and external to the Army, is the key point for any other issue. Morale in war-fighting it is the base on which it is possible to build any victory, but it must also be sustained with preeminent manpower, logistic re-supply and technological resources. The lack of any one of these factors could bring about a loss of morale and begin a vicious circle that could bring defeat.

The debate in those years in which the youngest officers want to leave the Army is a part of the broad problem of the today's military society. The challenge is to recruit, prepare, train, employ, and retire a person who is special because he is different in the values in which he believes.

A survey of the American Army in the nineteenth century reveals that, contrary to the popular image of the army as a bastion of the southern planter class, the officer corps was clearly a national institution[7]. By the antebellum era, the American officer corps was firmly in the hands of respectable middle and upper middle class families with traditions of public service. In fact, although the census of 1850 counts agriculture as about 45 percent of the work of the free male work force, farmers and planters composed less than a quarter of the fathers of the

officers of the Class of 1830. And just more than a quarter of the fathers of the pre-civil war officers were West Point graduates.

Probably the most important reason for the preponderance of officeholders, merchants and professional men among the fathers of Regulars, was that such men were in a better position to provide their sons with a formal education and the political influence necessary to procure a military appointment.

"But why did such men, coming from high respectably and political influence but moderate in economic circumstances, embark on military careers?" This was the rhetorical question posed by Edward Glick[8] in his1971 book Soldier, Scholars and Society." The answer may be found in different motivational reasons.

The moral: romantic experiences, an exciting and adventurous life, a strong sense of duty to the Country, a chance to do something, to be part of something great and important and be able to share it.

The rational: researching the self sustenance, achieving power and consensus through a different career to be ready for the next one, both in a politics and in an industry.

These reasons seem to be valid also nowadays.

During the Vietnam era (1969), a report showed that the number of colonels, navy captains, generals, and admirals who went to work in industry after retirement had tripled since 1959. Only 721 such retirees were working in defense industries in 1959; ten years later the number was 2072. Senator William Proxmire[9] said: "this is a most dangerous and shocking condition. It indicates the increasing influence of the big contractors with the military and the military with the big contractors".

Another questionable interaction between national legislators and the armed forces is the high number of senators and congressmen who found it so necessary to be in the military reserves. In 1964, they numbered 74; in 1969 they were 139. A hundred were from the House of Representatives and 39 from the Senate. "How many legislatures of other democracies allow 40 percent of the members of their upper chamber and more than 25 percent of those in their lower chamber to serve in the military reserves?"[10] This was the second question posed by Glick.

Again the answer is not simple, but we can say that in strong democracies, the military can also be seen as a vital part of the process of development of the Country and that its values are recognized as proper even if different from those held by most of civilian society.

But to see the civil-military relationship in a more true light, one must view it in the broadest possible context: the role of the military in North American national society.

The basic civil-military relationship is simply one of service, the military serves the parent civil society. The military establishment is designed, operated and supported to serve goals and interest –in particular security goals and interest- of the society at large. This is the fundamental, all-embracing relationship of the civil and military elements in a democratically governed society and all that the military does should aligned to this goal. For national societies as for individuals, safety and self preservation remain the first law of life. Today, as in the past, the security interests of the people require that they, their territory and their commerce be protected against attack and against outside pressures or efforts at coercion and interference based upon threats of military attack.

During the thermonuclear age of the Cold War[11], an increasing stress was put onto being able to accomplishing these objectives without any conflict –that is, avoiding war while safeguarding national freedom, peace, stability, confidence and well-being. It is the same in the 21st Century: to serve and protect the Nation in the demanding Global context, where risks and threats remain, and the need for highly-motivated personnel and their support is the main issue to be solved. The imperatives of national security are different and perhaps even more complex than in an era when, mass destruction through reciprocal nuclear missile attack lay less than one-hour flight time away.

This former security interest lies at the heart of the relationship between the military and the civil components of the society and define the framework within which more detailed relations must be examined. One major aspect of civil-military relations to which attention is often given is the tradition of civil control over the military establishment.

The principle itself is clear: under this system the military does what civil authority determines and only that. The application of this principle is complex and difficult for one fundamental reason, there is a vast and intricately interwoven body of military knowledge, expertise, procedure and organization that is indispensable to effective and economical military results consonant with the values and ideals of the society.[12]

The civil society is the source of the funds, resources and manpower from which the military forces and their supporting establishment are built and sustained. The government, that is the Executive, through the formulation and management of the budget, and the Congress through legislative authorization and appropriation, determines not only what resources will be made available for military purposes, but also how they are to be structured into programs and forces in being. Civilian society must decide the relative weight it wishes to give to defense and to opulence, but military men at the higher levels of responsibility must have understanding of

and respect for the processes by which the society and its government make such determinations.

The military profession in the United States has changed from a small and relatively isolated social group to a large body with elaborate and complex ties with civilian society. Before WWII, professional career commitments were formed early and tended to be fixed for a lifetime, if only because of the lack of opportunity to transfer to civilian employment. In this sense the military profession has completed its transformation. Today, large numbers of officers resign from the military after a limited number of years of service. Many more complete their professional careers after years of service while still in their forties and must find a second career.

These career decisions have long operated for enlisted men, but now, officer personnel must face them. The result is that the American armed forces must continually seek to strengthen professional commitment among those men whom they seek to retain. Military retirement benefits, including not only retirement pay and fringe benefits of medical services and the like, but also the skills that a military career develops, seem to be not enough for the Officers of the new generation.

And on the other hand there are significant barriers to retirement employment, legal and informal as well as the sheer lack of knowledge and limited civilian contacts that work against the American officer after a prolonged period of military service.[13]

4. THE ARMY OF ONE

The military institutions of today and tomorrow have to be ready for a different pattern of actions in order to accomplish the simple goal to have manpower enough to be able to carry on the wide, complex and demanding kind of actions required by the new world situation.

The problem is common for every Army of western culture. The present lack of interest in the vocation for military life finds its roots in the first-class situation of the society. Wide patterns of civilian job opportunities, wages higher than those offered by the military, rules and codes less demanding, less recurrent movement and more time to spend with family, are the most frequent "excuses" found by the analyzers at the end of whatever survey they have done, to explain why the "military way" is not as fascinating as ever.

But, being able to read between the lines, what can we find? It is a lack of motivation that has affected the choice. Good or sufficient salary, long periods of rest, the offer of some benefit, is just the material part of the military offer. And on this ground we cannot be competitive with the "civilian way," so we have to underline another aspect, the moral, which is one of the points

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of our strength. Many people became soldiers because they feel themselves different from the others. At least in some part of the everybody's choice there is the ancient rule of the cavalry, wear a uniform to defend an ideal. And today they follow the same rule, wear a uniform to be different, to change and to improve their own status, to be accepted by the Society as someone important for the defense of the inner values of that Society, but remain part of the society itself.

The social consensus affects the choice, so it is important to apply a strategy to try to shape the society because affection is not just linear. It is a circle in which one choice affects the other. Shaping the society prepares better ground to achieve a better consensus, and a better consensus offers superior access to manpower of which we should be able to choose the better part.

5. LOOKING FOR EXTERNAL CONSENSUS

The values of the Civilian society and of the Military are different, but those differences have to be exploited as an advantage and not as competition. We, the military and the civilian of western culture, walk on different paths that are not parallel, that could meet at some junction sometime, but are different even if moving in the same direction.

So what does the Civilian Way require of the military? To be part of the Nation, be under the civilian control and to be ready to fight and win the Nation's wars and to defend the common values.

a. Dealing with the Elite

The civilian elite in the United States recognizes that the military has a heavy weight in the foreign political arena and that they are a vital component in the protection of the economic source of power of the worldwide market. So, they (the Civilian Elite) are ready to give them (the Military) a great part of the resources available in order to maintain and enhance the well being of the population. This is the reason why 3.8%[14] of GDP is allocated for the Military.

In Italy, the development of the Political and Entrepreneurial Way after the disastrous end of War World II, was characterized by lack of confidence in the Military Way.

The new military was too closely identified with the previous one that had led Italy into the painful black hole of the war.

Even the remote commitment to a improbable war in Europe, and feeling ourselves protected by the NATO alliance and the American shield more than by our own Forces, the linkage with conscription and a mandatory draft system, was seen as a tax to pay. Together they diminished the importance that the Society gave to the military. Worst than that, the draft

service was seen as useless service, with ancient drills in the barracks and an unacceptable system of life that with its strict rules affected all the male citizens for one year of their lives without any specific reason other that the maintenance of an military society.

Only during the last ten years, in the new world order, with the new development of peace operations abroad, and the new voluntary service that is going to replace the draftee service, has the Italian Elite developed a different point of view of what the Military can do for the improvement of the Society in Italy and abroad.

b. Dealing with the People

The choices the citizens of a Country make are naturally linked with those of the Elite, due to the democratic connections through voters and the elected. In the United States, the Military Way is seen, from the people's point of view, as a demanding career that can offer many opportunities. Different Regions respond in different ways. Cultured and rich New England has the lowest percentage of military careerists in every grade of Officer, NCO or enlisted, meanwhile the less prosperous South, with problems of job and school attendance, is one of the major contributors to the ranks of the military service.[15]

Italy faces the same problem, stressed by the different level of well-being and way of life, that exists among the different Regions. We are moving away from the low percentage of volunteers available in the middle 80's. The success of the Leftist parties and the social revolution that they had imprinted on Italian society was partly responsible for the low numbers. Whereas the Leftists tried to put aside inner values from the mind of the young, the conservative idea of "service for the Country" has gained a wider acceptance nowadays.

However, the different job opportunities in the different regions of Italy give us the pattern of the enlistment. The major component of the Army, for example, is today coming from the regions of South Italy, in particular from Puglie and Campania.[16] Meanwhile, from the Northern area, characterized by wider opportunities of employment, the rate of the new enlistments, continues to be very low.

The system of enlistment in Italy is based on an annual law that allows the Military, in order to maintain youthful manpower, to enlist a certain number of soldiers just for the next five years. After that period they have to leave the Army. Only a small percentage is allowed to continue a career. The others have to find a new challenging future. In changing their careers they could enter a number of posts reserved for them in the Police, or in the Fire Brigade, or

they may take any other governments opportunities such a job in the Post Office, or in the City Law Enforcement.[17]

The mobility in the job is a thing that until now is not common in Italy, so the psychological challenge of spending five years in the Army and then begining again is not the point of major strength of the Military's campaign of enlistment.

6. LOOKING FOR INTERIOR CONSENSUS

The interior consensus within an organization is based on two factors that are critically connected. The moral aspect that is composed of the satisfaction of the "I, myself" and the satisfaction coming from sharing the values of the organization, and the pragmatic aspect that is the sum of benefits, beginning from the salary and ending with the free health care.

a. The morale factor

To enhance morale, the organization, through its leaders, has to take care to the improveme of the culture of its people and to valorize their personal achievements during ceremonies. This can raise the sense of emulation among the other participants. To valorize the person inside a small circle of influence, as family and friends, and to recognize personal success with the promotion to the upper level of the organization, is a very positive practice that reinforces morale. In this process, the success of the organization is the sum of the success and the satisfaction of the different individual.

On the second point, the moral values of tradition and heritage of the military institutions are the basis through which any military person identifies themselves with the broader values of the organization. This can be difficult, however, because military organizations tend to be rigid, with an inflexible pyramidal structure, strictly ordered by roles and rules, with firm objective and clear goals that are resistant to change from the inside.

In Italy, a smooth movement from the former values of a "all male group" that had characterized the Army, to an updating of a whole suite of values is underway. It must be done without forgetting the past traditional values of Duty for the Country and Heritage, that are more closely aligned with the quality of life and the personal expectations of today civilian society. This closer connective link with that part of society that lives outside the barracks and for the sharing of values with the civilian society seems to be more attractive approach today. Thus, the "civilian way" of looking at the military has become more favorable, enhancing the external consensus, reinforcing the strength of the internal consensus because the new enlisted soldiers

feel themselves more accepted by the whole society and not isolated as a small group bordering in a dark corner.

b. The pragmatic factor

The pragmatic factor is the whole array of benefits that can render the military career interesting from the economic point of view and that can offer the reason to follow-on in the military career.

In the United States, the competitive salary, the housing system, the pension, the free medical care and the benefits connected with military hotels and system of linked shops, are the corner stone of the challenge that the military career has to the civilian.

In Italy, salary is linked with that of the civilian Government employee who don't share the same responsibilities and risks of the military. The "housing system" is still restricted by the demands of the previous group of Officers and NCOs, and so is ineffective for the future larger demand of all the Army. A system of dedicated military hotels and resorts was seen as an unnecessary privilege, from the political view, and in the last year, was reduced a lot. The benefit linked with some focused shops is not in working due to the housing system where the military doesn't live just confined in some remote barracks away in the country, as in some places in the United States, but are located inside the social tissue of the Country. The pension and the health care are benefits shared not only by the military society. Due to the wide system of social welfare in Italy, they are shared from all the parts of the Society.

The improving of personal culture is progressing through a program linked with the European Community.[18] The program is focused on the study of the English language, the advanced use of PCs and the achievement of a job skill that can be use both in the military service and in a future civilian employ.

7. RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION

For the US Military Services, and for the Army in particular, the "transformation" is a very good vector to maintain the vital link with the society. Updating a bureaucratic structure is always seen as a good idea by the people who want to enter a organization because they prefer to be inside a young, dynamic and modern structure instead of an old one.

On the other hand, the US Marine Corp experience[19] tells us that their enlistments are based on the old traditions of being a Marine. So on this experience, we can also say that the tradition and heritage of the US Army has to be saved from a move to change everything. Viewing the Marine recruiting experience, even in the light of the five to eight times larger

numbers needed by the Army, it appears that the television advertising campaign focused on the dynamic action of camouflaged foot soldier, tanks and helicopters, presents the traditional challenge that can attract the young adventurous, outdoor types.

Conferences held by Officer and NCO in the different level of schooling is very useful. This is a path that the Italian Army has not followed yet. The usefulness of meeting in the school is double. The first is direct--to recruit new soldiers; the second is more important because it can have a considerable second effect--expand the knowledge of the military society inside the civilian one and shape the environment.

The updating of salaries, linked with the relative risk to life, is the basic answer to the request of the Soldiers. But different responsibilities may make different salaries necessary. In Italy, the economic career is not always linked with rank, but is based more to the years of service than the rank on the shoulders. This choice is accepted by those who have less responsibility, but it can create a disaffection in those who should lead the Army. The choice of an average salary is the today's answer to the problem of the lack of houses. That is a problem that cannot be satisfied in a moment or just with money, but requires a program over many years, strictly connected with plans for the future relocation of the Barracks away from the city.

The lack of interest in military service of the younger generation can be shaped with an intelligent and aggressive campaign of advertising. The campaign has to wipe out the previous image of the conscription Army and with it, the idea of inutility of the service that many adults have passed on to the younger generation. These adults are the parents of our next soldiers, so their ideas affect the ideas of their young offspring a lot.

Other means to spread sound military values, enhance morale, and build a feeling of emulation is to have television serial movies that show the strength of friendship, the responsibilities of young officers, the bravery of NCOs, and the pride in being a soldier.

The problem is when the soldiers have to be Italians. Until now, all the movies, and many books too, bring us some part of the stereotypical WWII experience, in which the Allied forces are always good and always winning. The Germans are strong, but losers. The Italians are wretched and cowards. It is difficult for a young Italian, without a great sense of self-confidence, to be able to change the impact of history and to enter the Army on a wave of enthusiasm produced by the movies.

So we have two ways to follow: one is to have new serial television movies, produced with suggestions of the Army, in which are underlined the new positive missions of the Italian Army in peace-keeping. The other is check the history and to underlined the bravery shown by our soldiers during WW II in any theater of operations, even if the end of the war was disastrous.

CONCLUSION

To make the Army a profession of choice is becoming a challenge for the future.

We, as future leaders of the organization, have the duty to maintain a live, dynamic and unique tissue of the organization: its personnel. We have to take care of them because our future is in their hands, without any other choice. The quality of life, the respect for the different roles and the application of rules and discipline, has to be our every day battlefield.

A battle has to be fought "against" ourselves, making a clear distinction through tradition to preserve and way of life that needs to be updated; "against" the civilian society, in order to promote our values without destroying the valid ones that live there; "against" the political way that tries to bridle our choices.

A battle for the survivability of our species: the soldiers.

A battle without mercy.

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